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DANGER... we have

no satellite spies

by **CHAPMAN PINCHER**

CPYRGHT

A GAMBLE that seals Britain's dependence on America, probably for ever, has been taken secretly by the Government.

In spite of strong warnings by the defence chiefs, the Government has decided to rely on the U.S. almost completely for the bulk of its future military, naval, and air intelligence.

This dangerous situation has arisen because of developments in reconnaissance satellites far more astounding than any manned space-flights.

Detailed

BRITISH intelligence men who have examined the latest photographs taken by orbiting American satellites say that objects only six feet long can be clearly identified from heights of 150 miles. Pictures taken by

orbiting radar devices at night are more detailed than the daytime recon-plane photographs of the last war.

The pictures are ejected in capsules — miniatures of those in which astronauts descend—and are plucked out of the sky by waiting aircraft.

U.S. scientists can not only detect when a rocket has been launched in Russia but since each missile writes its own signature in the form of its hot jet, satellites can identify the weapon within seconds of firing.

In short, the importance of keyhole espionage is being inexorably eroded by electronic advances. Yet because Britain has no satellites in orbit the Forces have no independent access to any of this information.

After weeks of back-door inquiry I have now established that the U.S. is providing satellite data to the British authorities under the existing joint intelligence

agreement. But the defence chiefs doubt that this will continue. The Government has repeatedly refused to pay for British satellites to be orbited by American rockets at bargain prices. It is pulling out of Eldo, the European launcher set-up. The Australians are being told that Britain will no longer pay for big-booster rocket facilities at Woomera.

Purpose

THE Americans are being magnanimous because all they are getting in return is the limited intelligence from ground-based agents still flowing into London from behind the iron and bamboo curtains.

But all aspects of Britain's "special relationship" with the U.S. are now being reviewed in Washington following the Government's announcement of its alignment with Europe, especially in the defence field.

So Britain's share of satellite intelligence may soon be restricted to that doled out to other European nations through Nato. This predicament

is bad enough for those responsible for the nation's defences, but what worries the defence chiefs even more is their knowledge of the new developments in satellite reconnaissance.

Within a few years the need for the ejection of capsules and the processing of photographs will be eliminated. Through advances in television telemetry, computers, and other devices, intelligence men on the ground will be able to snoop on military events anywhere in the world while they are happening.

The Americans will be able to watch all Russian and Chinese troop movements — down to platoon level. Information from cameras, radar, infra-red and other secret equipment will be assimilated by computers and served up as composite pictures in contrasting colours capable of neutralising any artificial camouflage.

Russia and China will be converted to open societies and the element of surprise will disappear from the battlefield for those with electronic eyes to see.

Naval Intelligence men will be able to keep every foreign warship under continual visual surveillance. Even submerged submarines will be detectable by infra-red devices sensitive to the wake of hot water from their power plants.

The Government's purpose in ignoring the warnings of the defence chiefs is clear enough.

Mr. Wilson and his remaining supporters realise that their only hope of political survival is being able to claim that they "got the nation's books straight" in time for the next General Election.

Talents

IN their determination to balance the books by cutting out costly projects irrespective of the long-term consequences they are behaving like the small-minded servant in the Parable of the Talents.

Entrusted with his master's money, he buried it in the ground for safety rather than risk investing it.

Unfortunately, with the rejection of technical challenges like reconnaissance satellites the Government is burying the nation's talents in more senses than one.